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Docket No. H64-154710M/MNN
NGB.260

REMARKS

Claims 1-14, 16-20, 22, and 24-26 are presently pending in the application. Claims 1, 9, 11, 12, 13, and 20 have been amended to more particularly define the invention. Claims 24-26 have been added to assure Applicants the degree of protection to which their invention entitles them. Claims 15, 21, and 23 have been cancelled in the interest of expediting prosecution.

The Office Action points out that claim 21 is substantially duplicative of claim 11. Claim 21 has been canceled. In addition, the Office Action rejects claim 12 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite, with the contention that it was inconsistent with its parent claim 1. Claim 12 has been amended to correct this. The Examiner's careful review of the claims is appreciated.

Claims 1, 3-4, 7-12, 14-18, 20-21 and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Manzer et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,256,463 in view of Katou et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,331,004. Claim 2 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Manzer et al. in view of Katou et al. as applied to claim 1, and further in view of Horie et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,208,640. Claims 5, 6 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Manzer et al. in view of Katou et al. as applied to claim 1, and further in view of Nonomura et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,389,253. These rejections are traversed.

The allowance of claim 22 and the indication of allowable subject matter in dependent claim 13 are noted with appreciation. However, Applicants respectfully submit that all the claims are allowable.

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A non-essential element has been removed from allowable claim 13 and placed in new claim 24. Claim 13 remains allowable.

Applicants' invention is an image forming apparatus. In an exemplary embodiment, the image forming apparatus includes a first image forming unit including a first printing section for forming a first image on a paper; a second image forming unit including a second printing section for forming a second image on the paper; and a paper conveying unit for conveying the paper from the first image forming unit to the second image forming unit. The first image forming unit further includes a first paper supply section for storing paper and supplying paper stored in the first paper supply section to the first printing section, while the second image forming unit further includes a second paper supply section for storing paper and supplying paper stored in the second paper supply section to the second printing section. Claim 1 sets forth Applicants' invention in such a manner by incorporating the essential subject matter of now-canceled claim 15, together with further limitations.

Manzer discloses a printing system and method for producing a mixed color sheet sequence. In Figure 2, Manzer's printing system includes a first printer unit 11 and a second printer unit 10. The Office Action rejected claim 15 with the contention that Figure 2 of Manzer teaches a first image forming unit 11 having a first paper supply 15 for supplying paper to a first printing section, and a second image forming unit 10 having a second paper supply section 14 for supplying paper to a second printing section 22. This contention and this rejection are traversed.

Manzer's first printer unit 11 prints on recording medium 15, which is shown as originating within first printer unit 11. However, second printer unit 10 prints on printing

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medium 14 which is received from an external source. Thus, Manzer does not disclose or suggest a second image forming unit which comprises a second paper supply section for storing paper.

Manzer's recording medium 14 is not disposed in second image forming unit 10. Clearly, Manzer's second image forming unit does not include a second paper supply section for storing paper and supplying paper stored in the second paper supply section to the second printing section, as recited in independent claim 1.

Katou, Horie, and Nonomura do not show or suggest an image forming apparatus in which a first image forming unit includes a first paper supply section for storing paper and supplying paper stored in the first paper supply section to a first printing section, and a second image forming unit includes a second paper supply section for storing paper and supplying paper stored in the second paper supply section to a second printing section.

By providing the first and second paper supply sections in the first and second image forming units, respectfully, the claimed image forming apparatus requires less floor space, making it more convenient and desirable.

Accordingly, it is respectfully urged that independent claim 1 distinguishes patentably from the references and is allowable.

Claims 2-12, 14-20, 24-26 are dependent from claim 1, and so are also allowable.

In view of the foregoing, Applicant submits that claims 1-14, 16-20, 22, and 24-26, all the claims presently pending in the application, are patentably distinct over the prior art of record and are allowable, and that the application is in condition for allowance. Such action would be appreciated.

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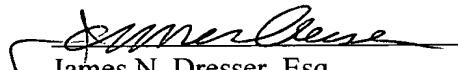
Should the Examiner find the application to be other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the local telephone number listed below to discuss any other changes deemed necessary for allowance in a telephonic or personal interview.

To the extent necessary, Applicant petitions for an extension of time under 37 CFR §1.136. The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiency in fees, including extension of time fees, or to credit any overpayment in fees to Attorney's Deposit Account No. 50-0481.

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